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CONTENTS

6 November 1989

NOTICE TO READERS: * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

CENTRAL AFRICA

Cameroon

Rumors Regarding Former President Denied *[AFP]* 1

Chad

Libyan Soldier Said Captured During Fighting *[Ndjamena Radio]* 1

Congo

Planning Council Approves Economic Liberalization *[AFP]* 1

EAST AFRICA

Ethiopia

Eritrean Radio Reports 'Intense Air Raids' *[Voice of Eritrean Broad Masses]* 3
Tigray Radio Says Officers Seek Asylum in Sanaa *[Voice of Tigray Revolution]* 3
EPDRF Claims Capture of Kara Michik *[Voice of Tigray Revolution]* 3
Rebel Radio Reports 28 Oct Battle *[Voice of Ethiopian Broad Masses]* 3
Tigray Radio on Air Raids in Welo, Shewa Regions *[Voice of Tigray Revolution]* 3
TPLF-Government Hold 'Constructive' Talks *[AFP]* 4
Peace Talks Delayed 9 Hours *[Accra Radio]* 4
TPLF Doubts Government's Desire for Peace *[AFP]* 4
Government To Restore Relations With Israel *[Addis Ababa Radio]* 5

Somalia

Barre Appoints Constitution Review Committee *[AFP]* 5

Uganda

Civil Servants Dismissed in Corruption Crackdown *[Kampala Radio]* 5

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Pik Botha Views Reports on SWAPO Activity *[Johannesburg Radio]* 7
Insists UN Broadcast SWAPO Activity *[SAPA]* 7
'No Evidence' UN Sent SWAPO Messages *[SAPA]* 8
Columnist Views Pik Botha SWAPO Allegations *[SUNDAY STAR 5 Nov]* 8
Dissident Officers Said Behind SWAPO Affair *[SUNDAY TIMES 5 Nov]* 9
Botha, Angola's Van Dunem To Discuss SWAPO *[Johannesburg TV]* 10
Reports on Possible Mandela Release Denied *[Maputo Radio]* 10

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Angola

'Important' UNITA Base Said Seized *[Umtata Radio]* 11

Mauritius

Demonstration Planned at U.S. Embassy 6 Nov /AFP/ 11

Namibia

Pienaar Reports 'Calm,' Elections To Proceed /SAPA/	11
Group Says SWAPO To Blame for Media Image /SAPA/	11
UN, Pienaar Agree on Constituent Assembly Rules /SAPA/	12
SAPA Reveals Topics for Van Dunem-Botha Talks /SAPA/	12
Botha Meets Press on Arrival for Van Dunem Talks /Johannesburg TV/	12
Further on Botha Press Briefing /SAPA/	13
Botha, Van Dunem View Namibian Elections /Johannesburg Radio/	14

Cameroon

Rumors Regarding Former President Denied

AB3110190289 Paris AFP in French 0959 GMT
31 Oct 89

[Text] Yaounde, 31 Oct (AFP)—The presidency of the Republic last night denied holding negotiations with former President Ahmadou Ahidjo. This was in reaction to persistent rumors that the state was about to allow the former head of state to return to Cameroon.

The communique issued by the presidency, similar to another communique issued by the Cameroonian ambassador to France, Simon Nkoo Etoungou, denied "crude rumors from sources very far removed from the government in Yaounde" regarding "so-called negotiations" between the government and the former president.

According to observers, the rumors are based on several facts, including the renovation of the former principal residence of Mr Ahidjo in Garoua (Northern Province) and the recent decision to once again accept the old CFA-franc bank-notes bearing the likeness of Mr Ahidjo, which were withdrawn from circulation in 1985.

Some people even thought President Ahidjo had returned to Garoua several weeks ago. "There is no question of entering into negotiations anywhere with former President Ahidjo," stated the communique issued in Yaounde. "The Cameroonian Government, under the leadership of President Paul Biya, has better things to do today in its task of reviving the economy than to bring ghosts back to life," the communique concluded.

The rumors circulating in Cameroon about the return of the former head of state also stated economic reasons: The former president allegedly had a foreign bank account with several hundred billion CFA francs in it.

Finally, according to the rumors, the health of Mr Ahidjo, who has been hospitalized for some months in France, could lead people to believe that he might be allowed to return home to spend his last days in his native land, in accordance with Muslim tradition.

Judging from the relatively harsh tone of the communique issued yesterday, some observers believe that the political authorities in Yaounde want to maintain a position of strength. Establishing conditions for the return of Mr Ahidjo as part of a compromise would only weaken the authority of President Biya, observers noted, since he is facing a severe economic crisis and is trying to gradually bring about rigorous adjustment measures.

Ahmadou Ahidjo left Cameroon in August 1983 and has not returned. Accused of plotting, he was sentenced to death by the military tribunal in Yaounde, a sentence that President Biya commuted to life imprisonment in March 1984.

About 50 former followers of President Ahidjo have been detained since the April 1984 coup attempt, it is

believed in Yaounde, and the return of the former president cannot come about without a prior release of those detainees.

Chad

Libyan Soldier Said Captured During Fighting

AB0411201289 Ndjamena Domestic Service in French
1900 GMT 4 Nov 89

[Text] As you have heard, the communique on the 30 October fighting stated that material evidence would be provided in coming days. Indeed, a Libyan soldier has been identified among the prisoners of war captured by the Chadian National Armed Forces [FANT] during the fighting. In addition, fleeing fighters have spontaneously and massively joined the FANT's ranks. This new evidence categorically repudiates Libya's allegations faithfully repeated by Radio France International.

Congo

Planning Council Approves Economic Liberalization

AB0111211189 Paris AFP in French 1747 GMT
31 Oct 89

[Text] Brazzaville, 31 Oct (AFP)—The National Council on Planning of Congo has approved the liberalization of the Congolese economy, a step suggested on 28 October by the head of state, General Denis Sassou-Nguesso, an official source announced today in Brazzaville.

"The council has adhered to the proposed strategy aimed at balancing the public finances and promoting the private sector," it was stated in the communique issued at the end of the council's meeting.

Opening the meeting, President Sassou-Nguesso spoke in favor of a new economic strategy to put an end to the monopolies of public investments in the national economy, monopolies that led to the failure of the state productive sector. This new strategy is based on "integration of the private sector in the development process."

The state sector, which was given priority in the Congolese economy following the creation in 1969 of the Congolese Labor Party (PCT-sole party), has recorded losses of about 75 billion CFA francs since 1984. The final communique said, however, that this state sector will not be abolished but will be "rationalized" at the level of strategic enterprises, including those of posts and telecommunications, electricity, water, and river and railway transportation. In order to ensure the full development of the private sector, the participants in the national council on planning meeting decided to abolish four taxes and to make the value-added tax [VAT] applicable to all enterprises.

The VAT replaces four other taxes, which heavily burdened taxpayers and inhibited the private sector. They

are the domestic tax on transactions, the sales surtax, the sales tax, and the domestic sales tax.

The council meeting, which brought together more than 500 economists and political and administrative cadres, was aimed at preparing the economic and social plan of action for 1990-1994. The council recommended that 150

billion CFA francs be appropriated to finance this plan, which is being supported largely by external borrowing.

In his closing address, the Congolese prime minister, Mr Alphonse Sochlaty-Poaty, stated that the implementation of this plan is a "challenge" that must be met, even though the country's investment capabilities were low in view of the decrease in earnings from oil.

Ethiopia

Eritrean Radio Reports 'Intense Air Raids'

EA0311191689 (Clandestine) Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea in Tigrinya 1500 GMT 3 Nov 89

[Excerpt] Ethiopian fighter aircraft have carried out intense air raids over the central part of the eastern zone. The raids were launched on civilians in Sheib [35 miles north of Asmera], (Weid Tikor), (Marsa Kordae) and surrounding areas. Local inhabitants are said to have been made homeless by the air raids. [passage omitted]

Tigray Radio Says Officers Seek Asylum in Sanaa

EA0411182589 (Clandestine) Voice of the Tigray Revolution in Amharic to Ethiopia 0400 GMT 3 Nov 89

[Text] Political loyalty to the Dergue is waning in the Armed Forces, which have been isolated from the entire Ethiopian people by the fascist Workers Party of Ethiopia [WPE]. This applies to so-called loyal officers. The Armed Forces on which the Dergue relies are expressing their opposition in various ways, at a time when they are crippled.

Accordingly, the number of WPE officers escaping from the moribund and fascist WPE is increasing daily. It was recently learned that a number of members of the WPE Air Force and two officers opposed to the Dergue's rule escaped from the (?system) and asked for political asylum in Sanaa, North Yemen. The officers, Lieutenant Abraham Dinku and Lieutenant Afeworki Ategna, were Air Force technicians. [passage indistinct] They said that because of their opposition to the Dergue's savage genocide against innocent people, they decided to escape. [passage indistinct]

It is to be recalled that [words indistinct] flew to North Yemen in a Mig-23 fighter plane and sought political asylum. The two officers who escaped recently belonged to a group—including a pilot, technicians, and engineers—sent from Dire Dawa to bring back the Mig-23 from North Yemen.

According to sources in the North Yemeni capital, Sanaa, the Dergue prevented the remaining members of the group from leaving the Ethiopian Embassy in Yemen when it learned of the escape of the three [as heard] officers. As a result it was able to get them back to Ethiopia. [passage indistinct]

EPDRF Claims Capture of Kara Michik

EA0411193589 (Clandestine) Voice of Tigray Revolution in Tigrinya to Ethiopia 1545 GMT 4 Nov 89

[Excerpts] With the full support of the people, the heroic People's Army of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front [EPRDF] is continuing its successful operations in the central part of the country with a view to accomplishing its mission of ensuring national peace and democracy. Accordingly, it has captured Kara

Michik, a strategic position, and hoisted its peace flag in Mehal Meda Province of northern Shewa.

On the evening of 29 October and during the morning of 1 November, the EPRDF People's Army advanced to the town of (Marama) in Mehal Meda Province and crushed the 1st Battalion of the 151st Brigade of the 15th Army Division, which was stationed at Kara Michik, and its reinforcements, subsequently placing the area under its control.

Our People's Army also attacked and repulsed enemy troops who were transported in seven vehicles from (Marama) in order to recapture the strategic area. It has been learned that some of the retreating troops went back to (Marama), while others headed for home.

During the engagement, the EPRDF People's Army killed 100 Workers Party of Ethiopia troops, wounded 160, and captured 25 others. [passage omitted] In addition, 30 Kalashnikov rifles, 26 handgrenades, and a large quantity of ammunition was seized by our revolution. [passage omitted]

Rebel Radio Reports 28 Oct Battle

EA0611091089 (Clandestine) Voice of the Broad Masses of Ethiopia in Amharic 0300 GMT 6 Nov 89

[Excerpt] The fascist Workers Party of Ethiopia [WPE], which is desperately lurching around using its tribalistic and divisive policy to massacre people, is finding itself isolated from the entire population, including its Army, and continues to suffer heavy defeats as a result of the persistent and powerful attacks launched upon it by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front [EPDRF] Army. On 28 October, enemy troops from the 11th and 33d Brigades of the ground forces, which advanced with armored vehicles and artillery to recapture Kimir Dingay and surroundings [in Gonder region] were punished by the EPDRF Army with the participation of the people. In the battle, which lasted from morning to noon, 250 WPE troops were killed, over 400 were wounded, and 71 were captured. In addition, 110 medium and light automatic weapons, 4 radio communications sets, large quantities of ammunition, and other military equipment were seized by our heroic Army. [passage omitted]

Tigray Radio on Air Raids in Welo, Shewa Regions

EA0411194289 (Clandestine) Voice of the Tigray Revolution in Tigrinya to Ethiopia 1545 GMT 4 Nov 89

[Summary From Poor Reception] The antipeace Workers Party of Ethiopia [WPE] has carried out an air raid on Degolo, capital of Jama, in southern Welo. During the air raid on 29 October, three civilians were wounded and two houses burned out. The fascist WPE carried out a similar air raid around Kara Michik, in northern Shewa, and attempted to destroy a church. No casualties were reported. In another incident on 2 November, the WPE conducted an air raid over the town of Kobo, in northern Welo region. Three civilians were

killed and seven others wounded. Ten houses, a school, and a private vehicle were destroyed.

TPLF-Government Hold 'Constructive' Talks

*AB0511155489 Paris AFP in English 1528 GMT
5 Nov 89*

[Text] Rome, Nov 4 [date as received] (AFP)—An Ethiopian Government team and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) Sunday began a second day of what a source close to the negotiators described as "cordial and constructive" peace talks here.

The TPLF, which has fought for greater autonomy in northern Ethiopia's Tigray Province for more than 14 years, issued a statement early Sunday recalling that "hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians have died" in the conflict.

The civil war was "of such serious consequence to the Ethiopian economy that peace-seeking has become a vital task," the front said, adding that the TPLF is "ready to negotiate in a spirit of sincerity and openness."

The preliminary talks here, attended by Italian Government observers at the request of the two sides, arise from an agreement in London last September, and aim to set an agenda for full-fledged peace negotiations.

The Ethiopian team is headed by Ashagre Yigletu, secretary of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers Party of Ethiopia, while the TPLF delegation is led by its Central Committee chairman, Meles Zenawi.

A rebel leader, Berhane Gebre Christos, said Friday that the TPLF controlled almost all the province, had 40,000 Ethiopian prisoners of war, and was going into talks from "a position of strength".

In what some observers saw as a major extension of previous rebel demands for autonomy in the province, Mr Berhane added that the TPLF was seeking a provisional government formed to draw up a democratic constitution and prepare for free elections.

The rebels, originally armed and trained by their northern neighbors in the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), last August launched an offensive which has taken them—virtually uncontested—deep south into Welo Province and west into Gonder.

Politically, the TPLF is on much the same side of the fence as the Marxist government in Addis Ababa. Among other political tendencies, it has a strong Marxist-Leninist faction. But Mr Berhane added Friday that it wanted all Soviet, Cuban and North Korean advisors out of Ethiopia.

In Addis Ababa on Friday [3 November], the official ETHIOPIAN NEWS AGENCY ENA charged Tigray rebels in Gonder Province of showing contempt for the people and the national flag, which it said they were burning or using to carry flour and other commodities.

ENA reported that the rebels were also tearing down the offices of mass organizations to use building materials and furniture for firewood, while forcing local people to provide for them in a widely resented show of "arrogance".

Peace Talks Delayed 9 Hours

*AB0511194889 Accra Domestic Service in English
1800 GMT 5 Nov 89*

[Text] The peace talks between the Ethiopian Government and the rebel Tigray People's Liberation Front, began in Rome today. The preliminary talks were delayed for 9 hours, caused by procedural disputes. The brief session heard opening speeches but did no negotiations. Sources close to the rebels say they will present an eight-point peace plan as a framework for the negotiations to end the long-running civil war in northern Ethiopia. This document, which was adopted by the Front's congress last March, calls for the formation of a broad-based provisional government in Ethiopia to include representatives of all the country's political organizations.

Conference sources described the atmosphere at the talks as friendly. The Ethiopian Government's delegation is led by Mr Ashagre Yigletu who is secretary for external relations in the Central Committee of the ruling Workers Party. He also led the delegation to the peace talks with Eritrean People's Liberation Front in Atlanta, Georgia. The Tigray team is headed by the movement's chairman, Mr Meles Zenawi. Italy's observer at the talks is Mr (Oliviero Rosi), a senior Foreign Ministry official and former ambassador to Ethiopia.

TPLF Doubts Government's Desire for Peace

*AB0511223289 Paris AFP in English 2230 GMT
5 Nov 89*

[Excerpts] Nairobi, Nov 5 (AFP)—Rebels of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) have accused the Ethiopian Government of issuing an "anti-peace statement" during peace talks between rebels and government officials in Rome.

In a statement sent from London to the Nairobi bureau of AGENCIE FRANCE-PRESSE, the TPLF said it had refrained from replying to the government's statement "in order not to jeopardize the peace talks by turning them into slanging matches".

An Ethiopian Government team and the TPLF held a second day of preliminary peace talks in Rome on Sunday. [passage omitted]

The rebels did not give details about the alleged anti-peace statement by the government, apart from saying that "it had repeated all the stale propaganda the Ethiopia people are accustomed to".

In Addis Ababa on Friday, the official ETHIOPIA NEWS AGENCY ENA charged Tigray rebels in Gonder Province with showing contempt for the people and the

national flag, which it said they were burning or using to carry flour and other commodities.

It was not clear whether the rebels were referring to the ENA dispatch or to another statement. [passage omitted]

The rebel statement received here Sunday said: "The contents of the press statement and the time chosen for its issuing forces us to cast serious doubt as to the intentions of the Dergue (Ethiopian Government) to negotiate seriously for peace," the TPLF's statement said.

"The search for peace has thus become an urgent task of every concerned Ethiopian. The people of Ethiopia yearn for just and lasting peace," The TPLF statement said. [passage omitted]

Government To Restore Relations With Israel

AB0311165189 Addis Ababa in English to Neighboring Countries 1530 GMT 3 Nov 89

[Text] A spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced today that the Government of the PDRE [People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia] has decided to restore and resume full diplomatic relations with Israel.

The spokesman recalled that Ethiopia had severed its diplomatic relations with Israel in response to the call initially made by the OAU in the wake of the October 1973 Israeli invasion and occupation of Egyptian territory, a member country of the OAU.

The spokesman amplified that [it was] in the spirit of African solidarity and in consideration of the traditional close, friendly relations with Egypt that Ethiopia severed her diplomatic relations with Israel. The spokesman further said that the reasons that had prompted the OAU to impose sanctions have long ceased to exist. Not only that, Israel has evacuated Egyptian territory following the Camp David agreement between the parties concerned.

The spokesman underscored that the decision of the Ethiopian Government would enable it to exercise its influence with the Government of Israel and other governments in the area towards the promotion of durable peace and stability in the region, thereby further enhancing Ethiopia's close relations with countries of the Arab world and its principled support of the cause and legitimate aspirations of the people of Palestine.

Somalia

Barre Appoints Constitution Review Committee

AB0611140089 Paris AFP in English 1317 GMT 6 Nov 89

[Text] Mogadishu, Nov 6 (AFP)—Somali President Mohamed Siad Barre has appointed a six-man committee to review the country's Constitution ahead of a proposed multi-party political system, Radio Mogadishu said Monday citing a statement from the office of the

president. The committee, which includes the recently-freed detainee Ismail Jumale Osoble, comprises lawyers and university professors.

The radio said the committee was charged with amending the 1979 Constitution which outlawed all political parties in Somalia except the ruling Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP).

President Barre announced last June that his government proposed to introduce a multi-party system in December 1990 "in parallel with the country's new economic reform" and invited opposition groups for a dialogue "any where any time."

Uganda

Civil Servants Dismissed in Corruption Crackdown

EA0111171289 Kampala Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 31 Oct 89

[Excerpts] About 100 more government officials, including 4 permanent secretaries, have been dismissed or retired as a part of the continuing exercise to clean the civil service of corrupt employees and those embezzling public funds. Others were retired or dismissed because of incompetency. Two of the four permanent secretaries removed from the public service were dismissed. They are Dr Nathan Eric Masaba and Mrs Janet Opio, who have been working in the office of the president. The other two, Mr Akisoferi (?Mikaili) Ogola Ministry of Health and Mr Kesi Rukanga Nyakimwe Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, have been retired in public interest. [passage omitted]

In a press release issued in Kampala today by the minister of public service and Cabinet affairs, Mr Tom Rubale, the government assured the public and taxpayers in particular that in its steadfast pursuit of point number seven of the NRM [National Resistance Movement] 10-point program, namely the elimination of corruption and misuse of power, government will continue to weed out from the civil service persons that obstruct the process of economic recovery of the country. The government alerted the public to attempts by many of these discarded fellows to approach them with pleas of innocence and empty threats of all sorts. Their pleas and threats, the statement said, should be treated with the contempt they deserve. The statement concluded with the declaration: The struggle continues.

Talking to the press, the minister said officers who have been retired or dismissed will be investigated and all the ill-gotten assets will be confiscated. He added that investigative arms of government will conduct investigations in all cases of embezzlement and corruption and taken to court and all convictions serve the sentence. [sentence as heard]

The minister added that the police will have to provide sufficient evidence for those to be prosecuted. Mr Rubale reiterated government's commitment to strengthening the judiciary and the police force. He said

officers retired in the public interest will have all their benefits but if later found to have embezzled or acted corruptly during their terms of office, their terminal benefits will be terminated.

Mr Rubale also told the press that the public service level of earnings leaves a lot to be desired and the

government is trying to alleviate the hardships, adding that a new circular concerning allowances will soon be out. He appealed for [words indistinct] from the [word indistinct] and corruption not among officers but also among those in low cadres. The press conference was attended by the secretary to the Cabinet, Mr [Azaria Kige].

Pik Botha Views Reports on SWAPO Activity

*MB0311121089 Johannesburg Domestic Service
in English 1100 GMT 3 Nov 89*

[Text] The minister of foreign affairs, Mr Pik Botha, has announced that agreement has been reached with Angola on the deployment of joint reconnaissance teams comprising South Africa, Angolan, and UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] staff (?up to) 52 km from the Angolan border with South-West Africa [SWA]/Namibia. He said in a statement issued in Pretoria that reconnaissance would be carried out with the aid of helicopters.

Mr Botha said that the agreement was an important and positive step. He said there was no doubt about the genuineness of certain UNTAG broadcasts about SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] near the SWA/Namibian border. He said that the information contained in these broadcasts was the same as that obtained from other sources.

Mr Botha said that the information in the broadcasts was basically that several hundred members of the military wing of SWAPO were on the point of crossing the border, and that convoys had been spotted near the border—two lorries which had been spotted transporting soldiers and had been seen returning to Angola empty. The broadcasts had warned UNTAG units to remain neutral. They expressed the fear that a critical situation was developing.

Insists UN Broadcast SWAPO Activity

*MB0311130389 Johannesburg SAPA in English
1258 GMT 3 Nov 89*

[Text] Pretoria Nov 3 SAPA—A technical investigation team of the SA [South African] Defence Force on Thursday [2 November] established without doubt that radio transmissions had taken place this week about alleged increased SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] military activity on the Namibian/Angolan border, the minister of foreign affairs, Mr Pik Botha, said on Friday afternoon. It had also been established that the transmissions had been done on a frequency allocated to an UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] battalion.

However, Mr Botha added, if the transmissions were nevertheless a hoax, "I would be the first to be overjoyed. At least it has resulted in everybody being sensitised to the need to curtail violence or intimidation of any kind whatsoever," Mr Botha said. What was of decisive importance to the South African Government was not who was responsible for the transmissions, "but that the election in the territory proceed fairly and freely".

Mr Botha last Wednesday [1 November] said the chief of the defence force, General Jannie Geldenhuys, and the director-general of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr Neil van Heerden, had called him and the minister of defence, General Magnus Malan, out of a meeting to read to them a number of interceptions of radio broadcasts.

"Defence experts who were present assured us of the authenticity of these transmissions and that they had been broadcast on identifiable wavelengths." It was clear that the messages had been transmitted between UNTAG stations.

"I asked whether it was possible that this was disinformation. There is no doubt about the authenticity of the transmissions and the information was consistent with information received from other sources. The information indicated that several hundreds of PLAN [People's Liberation Army of Namibia] fighters were poised to cross the border and that convoys had already been observed at certain points near the border," Mr Botha said.

In the messages UNTAG units were warned to remain neutral and fears were expressed that a critical situation was developing. After further discussion and consideration of various options, "We decided to bring this information to the attention of Mr Ahtisaari as soon as possible".

He had traced him in Ovamboland and informed him telephonically that he had intercepts in his possession containing this information.

"His reaction was one of disbelief," Mr Botha said.

"I reminded him that on March 31 1989, when I had conveyed similar information, he had also not believed it. I said I didn't want to argue with him about the information and that it was in our mutual interest to take the speediest steps to ensure that there wouldn't be another mess in South-West Africa merely days before the election."

Mr Ahtisaari had said he would give the matter his most urgent attention.

"I would like to add that when I was unable to reach Mr Ahtisaari in Windhoek initially, I called Dr Perez de Cuellar in New York and this information was also conveyed to him," Mr Botha said.

Mr Botha said he had also invited representatives of a number of Western countries to his office and conveyed the information to them. "I appealed to them that their governments do everything possible to prevent the elections in South-West Africa from being derailed by violence."

After this, in response to questions from the media about potential obstacles in the way of independence for SWA/Namibia, he had released these details at a news conference and had said he was in contact with Mr Ahtisaari and a number of Western governments. Subsequently Mr Ahtisaari had denied that UNTAG had transmitted such messages.

"A technical investigation team of the defence force yesterday (Thursday) established without doubt that these transmissions had taken place. In other words, that which was picked up by our monitoring team was indeed transmitted. In the meantime it has been established that the transmissions were done on a frequency allocated to an UNTAG battalion."

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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6 November 1989

Mr Botha said he understood that it was still being denied that this battalion transmitted these particular messages.

"What is strange, however, is that when a frequency is allocated, that transmitter should be aware of messages transmitted on that frequency. This is a mystery which I do not feel disposed to try and resolve."

Mr Botha added that it had been agreed with Angola that joint reconnaissance teams comprising South Africa, Angola and UNTAG would patrol the Angolan side of the border with helicopters.

"This is an important and positive step."

The administrator-General, Mr Louis Pienaar, had, at the request of the SA Government, yet again requested Mr Ahtisaari's full co-operation "to ensure that effective joint patrols are carried out on the South-West African side of the border".

The SA Government was encouraged by the code of conduct that had been signed by all parties and trusted that the election would proceed fairly and without intimidation.

"In any case, the administrator-general has the necessary contingency plans in the event of any unforeseen occurrences," Mr Botha said.

'No Evidence' UN Sent SWAPO Messages

*MB0311172589 Johannesburg SAPA in English
1722 GMT 3 Nov 89*

[Text] Pretoria Nov 3 SAPA—Speculation that a "crackpot" had been responsible for radio transmissions, which the minister of foreign affairs on Tuesday [31 October] said were UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] inter-base transmissions revealing a SWAPO build-up, heightened on Friday night when Mr Pik Botha said there was no evidence to prove UNTAG was responsible for the radio messages.

Mr Botha said in a statement: "As matters stand now, there is no evidence, as far as I am concerned, that UNTAG was responsible for the transmissions. Who did it remains unclear." On Thursday night the foreign minister alluded to the "crackpot" possibility at a municipal by-election meeting in Johannesburg.

Mr Botha's statement on Friday apparently followed a report on the findings of a government technical team urgently instructed to investigate the messages. The UN asserted that the messages were "phony", while the United States said it had found no evidence of imminent large-scale SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] military incursions across the Namibian/Angolan border.

Columnist Views Pik Botha SWAPO Allegations

*MB0511095689 Johannesburg SUNDAY STAR
in English 5 Nov 89 pp 1-2*

[By Brendan Seery, Kitt Katzen, and John MacLennan]

[Text] South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha made an unannounced, lightning visit to Windhoek yesterday as Namibian independence continued to teeter on a crisis edge.

Only days after his angry allegations that SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] was massing troops on the border for an invasion, Mr Botha met Administrator-General Louis Pienaar and UN Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari for urgent discussions.

Mr Botha was also expected to meet the Angolan Foreign Minister, Mr Pedro van Dunem. It was expected that Mr van Dunem would fly in from Luanda and talk with Mr Botha at Windhoek's international airport.]

Mr Botha landed at Windhoek's Eros Airport aboard an executive jet shortly after 4.45 pm yesterday afternoon and was met by senior Foreign Affairs officials, including the director of the Administrator-General's Office, Mr Kobus Bauermeester.

Mr Bauermeester has been the head of the South African delegation to the Joint Commission sessions over the past few days, in which teams from South Africa, Angola, the UN and the SWA [South-West Africa] Police have been attempting to verify South African intelligence information that SWAPO insurgents are in southern Angola, south of the 16th parallel, in defiance of the agreed ceasefire and withdrawal timetable.

The crisis occurred with just over two days to go before Namibia's 700,000 voters go to the polls in the resolution 435 independence process.

It was precipitated by a succession of high-level blunders on the part of the military, intelligence and diplomatic arms of the South African Government this week.

General Magnus Malan, the Minister of Defence, bungled by supporting false information supplied by the SADF [South African Defense Force], despite its obvious flaws.

Foreign Minister Pik Botha blundered by abandoning all caution and going public after apparently panicking, yet failing to make elementary checks on the information supplied. As a result of their sudden TV press conference this week:

The prospects of the pro-South African Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, SWAPO's arch-rival in the election, have been dealt a severe blow, while SWAPO's have soared. The debacle threatens to wreck South Africa's slowly improving international image, with the Government's motives now suspect.

A deliberate disinformation campaign by elements within the SADF cannot be discounted. It is understood Mr Botha was given the go-ahead by the Cabinet to make a public announcement about the broadcasts and to place South Africa's security forces on full alert.

At least one senior Cabinet Minister proposed that South African troops cross the border into Namibia that same

day, but this was rejected. The source of the intercepted messages remains a mystery.

The South African Government is adamant that hundreds of signals monitored at an SADF base in Walvis Bay were transmitted on UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] frequencies between October 23 and October 31.

Even though the intercepts have been revealed to be a hoax, Defence Minister Magnus Malan claims the disclosure of SWAPO plans thwarted the organisation's attempts to subvert the election.

General Malan is still trying to maintain that there was a danger of a SWAPO invasion which was pre-empted and thwarted by what he termed Mr Botha's "revelation".

In a statement he said he has "substantive information" that SWAPO was set to make a show of force. He conceded the alleged invasion was made public at the TV press conference "to bring the developments to the notice of countries to whom the independence of SWA/Namibia is also concern."

The military is also pleased the South African Government has now secured agreement for joint patrols consisting of reconnaissance teams of Angolan, South African and UNTAG personnel to mount helicopter patrols 52 km into Angola.

Professor Willie Breytenbach, head of Stellenbosch University's Department of Africa Studies, commented: "This looks like typical pre-election disinformation."

"It is certain that SWAPO is in areas where they should not be and Mr Botha would not have been doing his job if he had not made this public."

DTA leader Mr Dirk Mudge said South Africa would have a lot to answer for—and it seemed, he said, that SWAPO would reap immediate election benefits as a result.

In South Africa, Democratic Party co-leader Dr Denis Worrall described Mr Botha's conduct as a "serious error of judgement" and said it was inexcusable that he failed to check out the facts with his own representatives in Namibia.

Said Democratic Party defence spokesman General Bob Rogers: "To go public like that without checking...he needs his head read."

Professor Fanie Jacobs, a CP [Conservative Party] spokesman on foreign affairs, said: "Could you imagine this Government of ours relies on unchecked sources to create a war situation? This is worse than a third-rate country."

He said Mr Botha could easily have verified the information with UNTAG before going public.

Dissident Officers Said Behind SWAPO Affair

MB0511103489 Johannesburg SUNDAY TIMES
in English 5 Nov 89 p 1

[By Lester Venter, De Wet Potgieter, and Peter Kenny]

[Text] Suspicion grew last night that dissident Army officers fabricated UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] radio signals to dupe the government into believing SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] was poised to mount a major armed incursion on the eve of the namibian election.

The aim, diplomats believe, was to derail the territory's independence and block the possibility of the enemy they had fought for years becoming the government.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha—who made public the phoney messages and alerted Western governments to the imminence of a SWAPO invasion—has been gravely embarrassed and is said to be fuming.

He flew to Windhoek yesterday for discussions with the Administrator-General, Mr Louis Pienaar. He will also be meeting Angola's Foreign Minister, Mr Afonso van Dunem.

In diplomatic and political circles yesterday it was said that much evidence pointed to a dirty-tricks operation by "Rambo" elements in or near Namibia.

A technical investigation conducted in collaboration with a British Royal Signals Corps unit attached to UNTAG revealed that most of the messages were transmitted on a frequency allocated to a Kenyan battalion stationed near Tsumeb.

However, an inspection of the log kept at the Kenyan battalion's headquarters revealed that none of the controversial messages was logged. This has [led] observers to conclude that the authors of the alarmist messages had either trespassed on the Kenyan frequency or had fabricated the intercepts which were sent to Pretoria. An investigation is under way to find the culprits.

A defence ministry spokesman declined to comment yesterday. Mr Botha and Minister of Defence General Magnus Malan, as well as Chief of the SADF [South African Defense Force] General Jan Geldenhuys, are determined to expose the guilty party, say diplomatic sources.

Diplomats have long been deeply concerned about conservative elements in the Armed Forces who have never been fully reconciled to the peace process in Namibia.

They opposed the ending of the war in Angola before it reached what they regarded as a conclusive stage. They also resented the cessation of open military support for UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] and what they saw as the "handing over" of Namibia to a near-communist SWAPO regime.

For some weeks, attempts have been made to persuade selected newspaper reporters that SWAPO units were massing for a big push into Namibia. However, scant evidence beyond a few arms caches could be produced to support the claims.

If the "intercepted" signals that triggered the latest controversy were not sent by UNTAG—and Mr Botha has conceded that he possesses no concrete evidence that

they were—then only someone with sophisticated equipment and inside knowledge of UNTAG codes and frequencies could have done so.

The drama that came close to wrecking years of patient effort by Mr Botha, with generals Malan and Geldenhuys as his side, began on Wednesday [1 November] during the weekly Cabinet meeting. Mr Neil van Heerden, the director-general of Foreign Affairs and General Geldenhuys called Mr Botha and General Malan from the meeting—a highly unusual procedure adopted only in emergencies.

The authenticity of the signals was discussed, but after assurances were given it was decided to alert the world to what was held to be SWAPO's intentions.

Mr Botha telephoned the head of the UNTAG mission, Mr Martti Ahtisaari, Dr Perez de Cuellar in New York and called in ambassadors of the major Western nations.

Soon afterwards, foreign governments with access to satellite surveillance began to express doubts about the authenticity of the "UNTAG" signals.

Senior Western diplomats have made it clear that at no time was the credibility of Mr Botha or his colleagues in doubt.

Yesterday it was announced that SA [South Africa—FBIS], Cuba and Angola would monitor Namibia's northern border with helicopter patrols.

Observers in Windhoek said SWAPO—which is known to have Armed Forces in Angola close to the Namibian border—had been given an unexpected propaganda bon-sella [gifts] by the botched signals episode.

Botha, Angola's Van Dunem To Discuss SWAPO

*MB0411171589 Johannesburg Television Service
in Afrikaans 1600 GMT 4 Nov 89*

[Excerpt] South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha and Pedro de Castro van Dunem, his Angolan counterpart, will meet in Windhoek this evening to discuss issues related to SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] personnel north of the border with Angola and other issues. The meeting will be held at Van Dunem's request.

Our news desk reports Van Dunem asked for this meeting to [words indistinct] South-West African/Namibian independence process.

Botha told newsmen at Eros Airport, near Windhoek, that it is in Angola's interest that South-West Africa/Namibia's elections next week occur (?without problems). [passage omitted]

Reports on Possible Mandela Release Denied

*MB0311143889 Maputo Domestic Service
in Portuguese 1410 GMT 3 Nov 89*

[Text] The South African Justice Ministry officially denied reports that Nelson Mandela could be released in January next year.

A ministry spokesman described such reports by the Western media as speculative but did not give other details.

Reports about Mandela's release began to appear after South African President F.W. de Klerk said his government is studying what steps to take after the release of seven ANC [African National Congress] senior officials. These steps could include lifting the state of emergency and releasing Nelson Mandela.

Angola

'Important' UNITA Base Said Seized

*MB0411092489 Umtata Capital Radio in English
0900 GMT 4 Nov 89*

[Text] Angolan Government forces say they have captured an important UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] rebel base in central Bie Province. A military source has said the base fell without a fight when rebels abandoned it. There has been no independent confirmation of the military source's claims and no explanation as to why the base is important or why the rebels left it.

Mauritius

Demonstration Planned at U.S. Embassy 6 Nov

*AB0411120489 Paris AFP in French 1105 GMT
4 Nov 89*

[Text] Port Louis, 4 Nov (AFP)—A symbolic demonstration will be organized in front of the U.S. Embassy on Monday, 6 November, by the youth wing of the Mauritius Socialist Movement [MSM] of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, which includes several parliamentarians of the party. This was learned in Port Louis yesterday.

The party thus wants to demonstrate its hostility against the U.S. military base at Diego Garcia and its indignation at the accident, which took place on 30 October, when a U.S. fighter plane accidentally dropped a bomb on a cruiser 32 miles off the coast of the island of Diego Garcia.

According to the communique, the Mauritian foreign minister, Sir Satcam Boolell, has officially protested the action to the U.S. Government.

The communique points out that the Mauritius Government does not have the facilities to deal with an accident that could have repercussions for the country, and it feels that the use of Diego Garcia as a military base is no longer necessary, considering that the route taken by oil tankers in the Indian Ocean is no longer dangerous due to the current detente between the superpowers.

Sir Satcam Boolell also deplored the fact that U.S. authorities did not take adequate precautionary measures. Paul Berenger, secretary general of the Maritian Militant Movement, described this accident as "extremely serious." He called on the Government of Mauritius to take the lead in drawing up the Indian Ocean Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty.

Namibia

Pienaar Reports 'Calm,' Elections To Proceed

*MB0311135089 Johannesburg SAPA in English
1333 GMT 3 Nov 89*

[Text] Windhoek Nov 3 SAPA—Namibia's administrator-general, Mr Louis Pienaar, says the situation in Namibia is calm and there is no reason for concern, according to an official spokesman in a SWABC [South-West African Broadcasting Corporation] broadcast on Friday.

There was no possibility of the election being delayed or not taking place, said the spokesman, Mr David Venter. "Everything concerning the election is proceeding according to plan. It will start on Tuesday [7 November] and be concluded as planned."

Mr Pienaar joined UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] in commanding the 10 political parties in the territory on the way in which they were conducting their campaigns.

"The calm which has characterised the last two weeks of the election period is a tribute to the responsible leadership which has been displayed by the leaders of all parties," Mr Venter said.

He said Mr Pienaar was confident this responsible attitude would continue during and after the election. However, his administration had made the necessary contingency plans to deal with any eventuality.

"The administrator-general is adamant that no person or political party will be allowed to disrupt this final phase en route to independence," Mr Venter said.

Mr Pienaar would remain in control of Namibia until the country's new Constitution had been written and accepted by a two-thirds majority of the members of the constituent assembly and South Africa officially declared it relinquished control of the country. "Only then will the administrator-general's task be completed."

South Africa was firmly committed to accepting the result of the election providing the process had been free and fair and expressed the will of the people, Mr Venter said. "South Africa looks forward to close cooperation with the government of an independent Namibia," he added.

Group Says SWAPO To Blame for Media Image

*MB0311201889 Johannesburg SAPA in English 1616
GMT 3 Nov 89*

[Text] Windhoek Nov 3 SAPA—The constituent assembly to be elected in Namibia next week should address the question of bias in the electronic media as a matter of urgency, according to a study of the SWA [South-West Africa] Broadcasting Corporation's [SWABC] handling of the election campaign conducted by the Namibia Peace Plan Study and Contact Group (NPP-435) released in Windhoek on Friday. The study

found that SWABC had taken a minimal and legalistic interpretation of impartiality.

By interpreting impartiality to mean giving equal time to all parties in a formal "election forum" slot, SWABC reinforced the negative image of SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] it created itself during the war.

SWAPO had largely itself to blame for the negative coverage it received, the study said. If the party had taken a more active approach to the electronic media and its negative reporting, SWAPO would have had a better chance of countering the SWABC bias. Yet SWAPO never once lodged a formal complaint about the treatment it got.

The NPP-435 study furthermore found that SWABC had consistently favoured the colonial administration and reported negatively on UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group].

It recommended that the constituent assembly laid down guidelines for the SWABC which would make use of the potential of the electronic media, especially radio, to promote national reconciliation and lessen tension in Namibian society.

This could not wait for independence and the matter had to be addressed urgently in the time between the election and independence.

UN, Pienaar Agree on Constituent Assembly Rules

*MB0311180389 Johannesburg SAPA in English
1800 GMT 3 Nov 89*

[Text] Windhoek Nov 3 SAPA—Namibian independence is finally on the road following the establishment on Friday [3 November] of rules and regulations governing a constituent assembly which will meet after the elections to draw up a new Constitution for the territory.

After several hours delay the administrator-general, Mr Louis Pienaar, and the United Nations reached full agreement on what is now known as the constituent assembly proclamation, 1989. The document had earlier been sent to UN Headquarters in New York for ratification after disagreement over the one sentence in the 10-page proclamation.

Under the proclamation, the terms and functions of the assembly have been clearly spelt out. Among the functions are that the 72-member body would draw up a Constitution for the territory, adopt the new Constitution by a two-thirds majority; formally declare the territory an independent state on a date determined by it; and establish, subject to the provisions of the new constitution, a government for the new state.

The proclamation also deals with other issues such as members' pay, the filling of vacancies in the event of death or otherwise and the rules and orders of debate in the body.

The proclamation lays down that the body must meet one week after the results of the elections have been certified by the relevant authorities. The presence of 37 members is necessary to constitute a quorum.

SAPA Reveals Topics for Van Dunem-Botha Talks

*MB0411173289 Johannesburg SAPA in English
1721 GMT 4 Nov 89*

[Text] Windhoek Nov 4 SAPA—South Africa's Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha is due to meet his Angolan counterpart, Mr Pedro de Castro van Dunem, in Windhoek on Saturday night for talks on bilateral issues.

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs in Windhoek, Mr Erich Blumer, told SAPA Mr Botha, accompanied by the director general of foreign affairs, Mr Neil van Heerden, arrived in the city at about 4pm and were meeting Administrator-General Louis Pienaar.

A meeting with Mr van Dunem, who is still to arrive, was expected to take place tonight and a press conference had been scheduled for 10pm [2000 GMT] at the administrator-general's house.

Mr Blumer said the meeting was one in an ongoing series on bilateral issues affecting Namibia and Angola. Although reports said Mr Botha earlier refused to comment, observers believe his release this week of information on alleged SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] military activity in southern Angola was expected to be top of the list.

Other issues, observers said, were expected to include the UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] rebel movement in Angola, the withdrawal of Cuban Armed Forces from that country, and possible cooperation between the two countries on joint water projects.

Botha Meets Press on Arrival for Van Dunem Talks

*MB0411183589 Johannesburg Television Service
in English 1800 GMT 4 Nov 89*

[“Network” program report by Andre le Roux on news conference with South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha by unidentified reporters at Eros Airport in Windhoek, Namibia]

[Text] The South African and Angolan foreign ministers are meeting in Windhoek this evening to discuss the movement of SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] forces north of the Angolan border. Requested by Angolan Foreign Minister Mr Pedro de Castro van Dunem, the meeting is expected to help get the independence process back on track:

The situation on the northern border of South-West Africa/Namibia is clearly causing some concern still at this point. That led to the surprise visit today to Windhoek by Foreign Minister Pik Botha. His counterpart, Angolan counterpart, is expected in the city later this evening as he was delayed on his flight from Luanda.

The meeting between Mr Botha and the Angolan foreign minister, as far as is known, the third in the last 3 weeks, takes place at the request of Mr Pedro de Castro van Dunem. Mr Botha did not want to be drawn on the substance of his talks with Mr van Dunem or any other people he might be speaking to during his brief visit to Windhoek. It is, however, reliably understood that Mr Botha will also be meeting some senior Namibian politicians while he is here.

The waiting press at Eros Airport were quickly out of their blocks to question Mr Botha on the controversy of the alleged intercepted UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] messages on impending SWAPO incursions of the north.

[Begin recording] [Reporter] Mr Botha, is there an internal investigation in South Africa into the source of those messages the United Nations claims have been hoaxes and blatant forgery?

[Botha] I am very clear that I am not interested; I am not interested really in that matter any longer. My interest is in this country and that the elections should be peaceful, open, and reasonable, and that is what I am really interested in.

[Reporter] Have you been reassured that those allegations are not true?

[Botha] I stated publicly that, as far as I was concerned, UNTAG did not send out the messages.

[Reporter] Have you any idea who did this?

[Botha] Really, it's not my job. My department does not really have technicians who can determine that, and my interest is...[changes thought] I've worked virtually my whole adult life, first in the World Court case, and later in the United Nations, and I have tried to make my contribution toward the independence of Namibia. I believe we are close to it, to the extent that we can be of assistance to make it possible. That is my interest. [end recording]

Mr Botha was asked whether he thought the process could go ahead.

[Begin Botha recording] I believe so. [end recording]

Further on Botha Press Briefing

MB0411210789 Johannesburg SAPA in English 2104
GMT 4 Nov 89

[Text] Windhoek Nov 4 SAPA—South African Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha says he was leaving Namibia with the firm impression that there would be peaceful, free and fair elections in the territory next week.

Mr Botha on Saturday [4 November] discussed the security scare he had created on Wednesday, concerning allegations about a SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization] military build-up, with the administrator-general, the United nations special representative,

SWAPO President Sam Nujoma and the Angolan foreign affairs minister. He said there was no need for the South African Defence Force to be on alert.

"My primary concern now is to see Namibia achieve independence in a peaceful manner," Mr Botha said at a late night press conference.

"I am happy to tell you that I am leaving Windhoek with the firm impression that there will be peaceful elections next week in Namibia and that the elections will be open, free and fair."

Mr Botha flew into Windhoek on Saturday afternoon to discuss allegations that SWAPO forces were massing on the Angolan border.

He met the Administrator-General Louis Pienaar, UN special representative Martti Ahtisaari, Angolan Foreign Minister Pedro de Castro van Dunem, Mr Nujoma and "other leaders".

South Africa and Angola had agreed that they would do what they could to assist Namibia to achieve independence in a peaceful and orderly manner.

Mr Botha said, "I am going back to Pretoria encouraged. I am hopeful. I am pleased that I came here and I am pleased the situation that arose earlier this week as far as I am concerned has been clarified and cleared up."

Mr Nujoma had assured him there were no armed SWAPO elements north of the border with Angola, mr Botha said.

"In the absence of any further evidence I have no choice but to accept Mr Nujoma's assurances," he said.

Mr Botha on Wednesday caused an uproar when he announced that the SA Defence Force had been placed on alert following the interception of UNTAG [UN Transition Assistance Group] reports that SWAPO forces were arming and massing near the border.

SWAPO denied the accusations, saying they had been fabricated to limit its certain victory. UNTAG said the messages were forgeries.

Mr Botha said he had received the message from the SADF and the defence force still maintained that they were genuine transmissions—"by whom I don't know".

South Africa and Angola had agreed to give urgent attention to the creation of a mechanism to patrol the border area, Mr Botha said, but no firm date for a meeting had been set.

He said he had no choice but to make the messages public, because he would have been in an untenable position if they had proved true and he had done nothing.

"I cannot pronounce myself on situations on which I'm not informed. In messages that I was told were transmitted did contain a threat—a very severe one, a very imminent one, just as was the case on March 31, provided by the same sources.

"There was no way for me to decide...that it was not a threat. It was the communication of the information that led to my present understanding that UNTAG was not responsible for these messages, and as far as I'm concerned the credibility of the allegations in the messages," Mr Botha said.

Asked if he had tried to verify the messages before going to the press, Mr Botha said he had asked the SADF if there was a possibility of disinformation "and I was assured there was no such possibility".

Mr van Dunem said Angola hoped the election process would go very well "I think if the situation that came about this week is really clarified, that the process will actually go very well."

Asked if he accepted Mr Nujoma's assurances about the absence of SWAPO forces south of the 16th parallel in Angola, Mr Botha said he had no choice but to do so.

"You see where we are leading to now again. If I say I do not then it causes further mistrust. If I say I do and something happens, then I'll be in exactly the same trouble I'm in now. SO I have just about reached a stage where I just want this territory to become independent," Mr Botha said.

Mr Botha said he could not say Defence Minister Magnus Malan must bear responsibility for the inaccuracy of the

messages. Mr Botha said he and Mr Nujoma had decided "to let bygones be bygones. We decided that we were not going to dwell in the past, but that we were looking to the future.

Mr Pienaar said he was confident the SWA [South-West Africa] Police could deal with any eventuality during and after the election. He said there had not been a general arming of whites, but that some police reservists had been issued with weapons to assist during the election.

Pressed on the source of the messages which started the whole furore, Mr Botha said it remained a mystery. He said the press was welcome to investigate, but he had to concentrate on the independence process.

Asked if he still thought Mr Nujoma was a terrorist, Mr Botha said he was not in Namibia to answer that sort of question.

"As far as my government is concerned, we will accept any result certified by Mr Ahtisaari," he said.

Botha, Van Dunem View Namibian Elections

MB0511053089 Johannesburg Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 5 Nov 89

[Text] After talks in Windhoek, the minister of foreign affairs, Mr Pik Botha, and his Angolan counterpart, Mr Pedro de Castro van Dunem, have both said they believed there would be a peaceful run-up to the election which will possibly be free and fair.

The secretary general of the UN, Dr Perez de Cuellar, said in New York that he was convinced that conditions in South-West Africa/Namibia favored a free and fair election.

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